New Nouveau Brunswick CANADA

News Release

Communications New Brunswick

NB Human Rights Commission

International Women's Day statement (05/03/07)

NB 272

March 7, 2005

FREDERICTON (CNB) - In recognition of International Women's Day, Tuesday, March 8, the following message is issued by Alanna Palmer, chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission.

"March 8 is International Women's Day. The day has been widely observed in many parts of the world since 1911.

The theme for this year, "*You are Here: Women, Canada and the World*", reminds us of the important place that women hold in Canada and in the world. It encourages Canadians to consider how far we have come and to join in the continuing journey towards gender equality.

In New Brunswick, the Human Rights Act first prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in 1971 and on the basis of marital status in 1973. It is hard to believe that, until then, it was legal for women to be excluded from jobs because of their sex, and to lose their job if they married. Amazingly, there was practically no legal remedy against sexual harassment until the first complaints were pursued by human rights commissions in the late 1970s.

Much progress has been made since then. The most recent human rights development that will benefit women is the addition of social condition as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Human Rights Act. This came into effect last month. One of the chief aims of this amendment is to protect income assistance recipients from discrimination in rental housing.

The commission published an interpretative guideline on social condition in January, as well as a guideline on pregnancy discrimination in September, both of which are available on our website.

Turning to the future, as the first woman to Chair the Human Rights Commission, I am pleased to have expressed the commission's support for the principle of pay equity in a submission to a legislative committee in November. The commission has also recommended the addition of family status (for example, being a parent) as a prohibited ground of discrimination, and we hope the government will act on this recommendation.

As we celebrate International Women's Day this year, I invite all New Brunswickers to reflect with pride on the accomplishments of all women, and to resolve to further advance sexual equality."

05/03/07

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following documents are available on line.

Guideline on social condition discrimination:

http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/Guideline-Social-Condition-Discrimination-New-Brunswick.pdf

Guideline on Pregnancy Discrimination

http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/Guideline-on-Pregnancy-Discrimination.pdf

Home page of Human Rights Commission:

http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/index.htm

MEDIA CONTACT: Alanna Palmer, Chair, N.B. Human Rights Commission, 506-453- 2301 or 1-888-471-2233.

05/03/07

Communications New Brunswick
E-mail | Contacts | Disclaimer | Privacy Statement